

Chapter I

Introduction

The 1994 Clark County Solid Waste Management Plan was developed to provide decision-makers with a current set of goals and policies for implementing, evaluating and modifying existing and future solid waste management programs. The 2000 Plan Update includes updated descriptions of existing conditions and programs to reflect progress and accomplishments over the previous years. It lists policies and practices reviewed by the Solid Waste Advisory Commission, solid waste staff, representatives of the seven cities, interested citizens, solid waste industry representatives and others. The policies and practices recommended by SWAC will be presented for adoption by the Clark County Board of County Commissioners and City Councils. They will guide solid waste policy into the future and outline programs and approaches for the coming five years.

The updated Plan provides decision-makers with three important tools:

- Guidelines for the development of programs, policies and operating plans;
- Background information to support facility permitting decisions by the Southwest Washington Health District (SWWHD) and other local government agencies;
- The technical support and justification for grant applications, capital project fund requests and future programs.

The Plan also provides the general public with information about solid waste management in Clark County.

The purpose of solid waste management activities in Clark County is to protect and preserve human health, environmental quality and natural resources through efficient, cost-effective programs and services.

State Planning Requirements and Guidelines

As are all counties in the state, Clark County is required by the Washington Solid Waste Management, Reduction and Recycling Act (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 70.95) to prepare a 20-year Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (the Plan). The Plan must be developed in association with cities and towns located in the county and reviewed at least every 5 years. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with requirements and intent of RCW 70.95 and Ecology's Guidelines for the Development of Local Solid Waste Management Plans and Plan Revisions (WDOE 90-11); 1991). Accordingly, it outlines Clark County's plans to follow the legislature's priorities for solid waste handling, in the following order:

1. waste reduction;
2. recycling, with source separation of recyclable materials as the preferred method;

3. energy recovery, incineration and landfilling of separated wastes;
4. energy recovery, incineration and landfilling of mixed wastes.

In accordance with RCW 70.95, the Plan emphasizes the source separation of recyclable materials from solid wastes as a fundamental component of a local jurisdiction's solid waste management strategy, and implements waste reduction and recycling programs to assist the state in effectively reaching the state's goal of a statewide recycling rate of 50%.

The Plan includes an inventory and evaluation of existing programs and facilities, a twenty-year forecast of facility and program needs, and implementation plan and schedule (*see Chapter 18*), and methods for monitoring and evaluating solid waste management activities within the County and cities.

Plan Goals and Objectives

The intent of the Plan is to establish the foundation for the proper management of solid and moderate risk wastes in Clark County, both now and in the future. The Plan update incorporates the following guiding or philosophical principles:

- Balance among public convenience, public expenses, public health and the environment;
- Flexibility to anticipate future changes and needs;
- Commitment to waste reduction and recycling;
- Increased local control of solid waste management;
- Integrity of waste stream measurement and monitoring;
- Encouragement of cooperative and coordinated efforts among government agencies, citizens and the private sector for managing solid wastes.

Relationship to Other Plans and Reports

The following plans and reports that are already in effect or are being developed separately may interact with the contents of this Plan. The following summarizes the more significant of these and their connection with the Plan.

Washington State Solid Waste Management Plan

Washington State, through Ecology, is required under RCW 70.95 to develop and maintain a long-range plan for the management of solid wastes. The goals and policies expressed in the state plan establish the framework upon which solid waste systems are to be administered and implemented throughout the state. Local plans should be

consistent with these goals and policies, unless these management approaches are superseded by new state laws, regulations or plans. The current state plan was updated in 1992 and issued in January 1994.

Oregon State Solid Waste Management Law

The State of Oregon requires all out-of-state local government jurisdictions that use Oregon solid waste disposal facilities to comply with Oregon statutes. Clark County and cities therefore must also meet the applicable Oregon Recycling requirements in the Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs), Division 60, the 1983 Opportunity to Recycle Act (Oregon Revised Statute [ORS] 459A) and Oregon Senate Bill 66, which was passed in 1991. The *Waste Recycling* Chapter describes these laws in detail.

Previous Clark County Solid Waste Management Plans

Solid waste planning in Clark County was initiated in 1967 with the adoption of the County's first Solid Waste Management Plan. The County updated the Plan in 1973, 1981, 1985, 1994 and amended it in 1986 and 1988. The *Background and Waste Stream Information* Chapter provides a review of the Planning History. This Plan, the Update 2000, is the most current plan for Clark County's rapidly changing solid waste system and replaces all previous plans.

Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan

The Clark and Skamania County Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan establishes handling and management approaches for household hazardous waste (HHW) and other small-quantity generator and moderate-risk wastes. The plan focuses on the need to remove these moderate-risk wastes from traditional solid waste handling and disposal streams. The original plan was prepared for both Clark County and Skamania County and was adopted on December 14, 1988. The Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan has since been amended in May 1991, July 1991, July 1992, September 1992 and March of 1994.

In 1997, responsibility for Moderate Risk Waste Program Planning and implementation for Clark County was shifted to the Clark County Solid Waste Management Program. Consequently, the Moderate Risk Waste Plan was updated in conjunction with the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. The Moderate Risk Waste Plan (MRW Plan) is integrated into this Plan as a new chapter. Other chapters of the Plan were updated to include the MRW tasks relevant to each chapter.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The Clark County Comprehensive Land Use Plan has been updated as described in the chapter on Background Conditions, under Growth Management. This land use plan established a framework for how Clark County land should be used in the future, including areas designated for urban development and areas identified and designated for rural and natural resource preservation.

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Plan

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in this Plan update evaluates the environmental impacts associated with implementing the programs or the non-site-specific aspects of the programs and facilities recommended in the Plan. The EIS was written to conform with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and is presented in Appendix A.

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Cost Assessment

A cost assessment has been prepared for submittal to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) as part of the Plan. This cost assessment is required by RCW 70.95 and provides the WUTC with an opportunity to review and comment on the impacts of implementing the Plan's programs on solid waste collection rates. The report was prepared to conform with the Cost Assessment Guidelines for Local Solid Waste Management Planning issued by the WUTC in January 1997. The cost assessment is presented in Appendix B.

Sludge (Biosolids) Management Plan

Clark County adopted the Salmon Creek Basin Sewer Master Plan in 1981. At that time, municipal wastewater sludge in Clark County was applied to land. However, with the expansion of the Salmon Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, beginning in 1986, sludge began to be applied to both agricultural lands and forested lands. Currently, the county and sludge handlers use Ecology's Best Management Practices (BMP's) guidance for site selection and application procedures.

Groundwater Management Plan

In 1994, the Washington Department of Ecology and Clark County Board of Commissioners approved *the Ground Water Management Plan for Clark County, Washington (Volumes 1 and 2)*. The Plan is a handbook (or reference document) that individuals and governmental agencies should use to remedy and prevent future groundwater problems. The Plan is a product of a 30-member Ground Water Advisory Committee for Clark County (e.g., local governmental agencies, the business community, as well as environmental and citizen interests), in cooperation with the Washington Department of Ecology and U.S. Geological Survey. The goal is to protect, preserve, and properly manage groundwater and related water resources by applying water and land use regulations; and through education, develop an attitude of individual and community stewardship of groundwater resources in Clark County. The Groundwater Management Program/Plan has created a collection of groundwater protection strategies ranging from enhancing public awareness and education, to commercial chemical management, to stormwater management. It has established the first countywide groundwater quality testing effort. It has also created the basis for other programs, including two wellhead protection programs and a groundwater modeling program for Clark County. Information and programs developed for the Ground Management Program/Plan supports the County's effort to comply with the state Growth Management Act and Federal Clean Water Act. It may also provide valuable information to comply with the Endangered Species Act.

NPDES Stormwater Management Program

The NPDES Stormwater Management Program was approved by the Clark County Commissioners in September 1998 as an application to meet the requirements for obtaining a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) for its storm sewers under the federal Clean Water Act. In July 1999, the Washington Department of Ecology issued an NPDES permit for Clark County that required the county to implement the Stormwater Management Program. The stormwater management program is intended to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged to streams, lakes and wetlands from county-owned storm sewers. Solid Waste Program education on proper storage, use, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials is a key part of the stormwater program.

Miscellaneous Solid-Waste-Related Contracts

The County and some of the cities have entered into major long-term contracts with private service providers for solid-waste-related services. The Columbia Resources Company (CRC) contract, between Clark County, the City of Vancouver and CRC, gives CRC responsibility for developing and operating two in-county transfer stations and transporting and disposing of solid wastes at the Finley Buttes Landfill in Eastern Oregon. Both CRC and the Finley Buttes Landfill were purchased by Waste Connections Inc. in 1999.

The Disposal Agreement is between Clark County, the City of Vancouver and the Leichner Brothers Land Reclamation Corporation. This agreement establishes responsibilities for closure, post-closure maintenance and groundwater remediation of the Leichner Landfill.

The Settlement Agreement is between Clark County, the City of Vancouver, Clark County Disposal Group companies and the WUTC. The agreement establishes funding channels for closure, post-closure maintenance and remediation activities at the Leichner Landfill.

In addition to these major contracts, the County and cities have entered into other contracts with private companies for services related to solid waste management, such as collection of residential recyclable materials and yard debris.

Clark County Solid Waste Advisory Commission

Clark County's Solid Waste Advisory Commission (SWAC) was originally formed in 1977 by Clark County Ordinance 1977-10-2, in accordance with the provisions of RCW 70.95. This ordinance, as modified over time, has been codified as Clark County Code (CCC) Chapter 24.16. Clark County's SWAC currently consists of nine members, appointed by the Clark County Board of Commissioners, and represents the following interests:

- The Vancouver City Council;
- The councils of the remaining cities and towns;
- Public interest groups;
- The Clark County business community;
- The solid waste management industry;
- The citizens of North Clark County;
- The citizens of Southeast Clark County;
- The citizens of Southwest Clark County;
- The citizens of Clark County at large.

The role of the SWAC is to advise the County Board of Commissioners on solid waste matters; to comment on rules, policies and ordinances; to assist in the development of plan updates; to serve as a means for citizens, industry or other bodies and individuals to participate in solid waste planning; and to advise on any other solid waste matters, as directed by the Board. The SWAC has reviewed and actively participated in the preparation of the Plan as described in the Appendix.

Planning Roles and Authorities

Following is a brief summary of solid waste management planning authorities, arranged in order of level of government jurisdiction.

Washington State Department of Ecology

Ecology is the state agency responsible for oversight of solid waste management. Ecology regulates compliance with RCW 70.95 and WAC 173-304 through its review and approval of local solid waste management plans.

Clark County

Clark County, through its Department of Public Works, has long-term solid waste planning and facility development responsibility within the County. The County's specific responsibilities include authority to prepare and update solid waste management plans which address waste reduction, recycling, transfer and disposal systems.

Participating Jurisdictions

State law assigns solid waste planning authority to individual local governments (RCW 70.95.08) and requires each county in the state to prepare a plan in cooperation with

cities and towns within that county. Cities may choose from the following three options in order to meet their planning requirements:

- Prepare and deliver, to the county auditor, a plan for the city's own solid waste management to be integrated into the county's plan;
- Enter into an agreement with the county in which the city participates in preparing a joint city-county plan for solid waste management;
- Authorize the county to prepare a plan for the city's solid waste management to be included in the county's plan.

The local governments who participate in the preparation of this joint county-city solid waste management plan update, by interlocal agreement with the County, are the Cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal, and the Town of Yacolt. The City of Woodland, a small portion of which lies in northwest Clark County and the remainder in Cowlitz County, is participating in Cowlitz County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. After preparation of the Plan, participating jurisdictions will formally consider adoption of the Plan through local resolutions of adoption. Inter-local agreements with the participating cities are included in Appendix D.

Plan Development and Adoption Process

The current update process began with surveys of all seven cities in Clark County and a telephone survey of County residents, as well as an assessment of current needs and opportunities. A draft text was developed to include many potential policies and practices, as well as updated information about current programs, facilities and issues. This Technical (Public Review) Draft, was developed and reviewed by the County Solid Waste Advisory Commission (SWAC). Comments from the cities' and residential surveys were also incorporated.

Several public meetings and a public hearing were held to describe and solicit input on the Plan and the proposed Alternatives (Proposed Policies and Practices). Three technical teams were convened to discuss and offer recommendations on issues relating to the topics of: County/Cities Coordination, Waste Hauling definitional issues, and Enforcement. (See *Appendix G* for a listing of the Teams' members, issues, and recommendations.) In addition to the three technical teams, several ad hoc workgroups met to review chapters or possible future working relationships. A group of representatives from several agencies and private sector companies met to review and update the Special Wastes chapter; the Bi-State workgroup was composed of staff from Portland Metro, City of Vancouver, and Clark County. The technical teams and the workgroups each proposed recommendations to the SWAC for their consideration and evaluation.

There were six public workshops, six city council presentations and 15 SWAC meetings held to gather public comment on the draft and the proposed policies and practices. The SWAC then used the following evaluation criteria to determine if a Proposed Alternative should be recommended for implementation:

- Balance among public convenience, public expenses, public health, and the environment.
Recommendations should look at solid waste management practices in the context of attempting to balance cost and convenience with natural resource conservation and environmental health values.
- Flexibility to anticipate future changes and needs.
Recommendations should support long term goals and allow for changing circumstances.
- Commitment to waste prevention, reduction and recycling
Recommendations should support the prevention and reduction of toxicity and solid waste as well as encourage recycling and other waste diversion opportunities.
- Increased local control of solid waste management.
Solid waste services should be regulated by the level of government as close to the citizens as appropriate. The County and Cities should have the management tools to achieve the goals of the Plan while fostering competition among service providers.
- Integrity of waste stream measurement and monitoring
Recommendations should allow the County to measure, compare and report our past and present efforts in a way that allows us to plan for the future and evaluate the effectiveness of our programs and the resources that we devote to them.
- Encouragement of cooperative and coordinated efforts among government agencies, citizens, and the private sector for managing solid wastes.
The County should maintain its commitment to collaborative management of solid waste by informing and involving citizens, other agencies, and the private sector.

The Preliminary Draft Plan was developed by incorporating the SWAC's recommended Alternatives into the Technical Draft. The SWAC then reviewed the Preliminary Draft. This Preliminary Draft Plan will be submitted to Ecology for review and comment and to the WUTC for evaluation for collection ratemaking purposes. On the basis of the comments received from Ecology, the Preliminary Draft will be revised as needed. This revised Draft will be presented to the SWAC for their recommendation for adoption, then to the participating cities and the County for adoption. After adoption, the Plan will be sent to Ecology for final approval.

Plan Modification and Revision

RCW 70.95 requires that the Plan be reviewed at least every five years; updating can occur at the five-year review or at other points in time, as needed. With each update, the Plan must be extended to show a revised 6-year construction and capital acquisition plan and any long-range needs for the next 20 years. The next plan review and update will be scheduled for 2005.

The County and/or participating cities may elect to modify the Plan prior to the full plan update in 2005. In addition, Ecology maintains the authority to require minor changes to the Plan.

For minor revisions, such as not undertaking activities from the 5 or 20-Year Plans, the County will:

- Explain in writing how the deviation will better contribute to accomplishing one or more goals of the Plan;
- Notify all cities and town;
- Notify and give the public an opportunity to comment, either prior to, or at a regular SWAC meeting;
- Notify Ecology of the proposed modification;
- Discuss the issue with SWAC and schedule their vote on the changes.

Major revisions (such as those which undertake actions outside of the 5 or 20 Year Plans, or alter the goals of the Plan) are termed “amendments” and would go through a full approval process (all cities and towns, Ecology, plus Council).